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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2645

January 14, 1994



Genetic maps produced by USDA research can help develop animals resistant to certain diseases and bacteria such as E. coli and Salmonella. At a news conference in Washington, D.C., Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said that development and implementation of the technology will result in a higher quality, safer and healthier food supply for consumers. L to R, Dean Plowman, acting assistant secretary of Science and Education; Secretary Espy; Dan Laster, director of the Meat and Animal Research Center, Clay NE; and U.S. Senator Robert Kerrey, who was linked to the conference from Nebraska by satellite. USDA photo by Bob Nichols.

ONE WETLAND MAP -- Farmers can now rely on a single wetland map from the Federal government to determine wetlands. An agreement among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Interior recognizes USDA's Soil Conservation Service as the lead federal agency for delineating wetlands on agricultural lands. James Lyons, assistant secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, says the agreement simplifies the process by eliminating multiple wetland maps for determining the extent of wetlands under the Swampbuster program and the Clean Water Act. Permits for work in wetlands continue to be administered by the Corps of Engineers and EPA.

WETLANDS RESERVE -- 1994 signup for the Wetlands Reserve Program will be conducted at ASCS offices February 28 through March 11. Congress has provided \$66 million to enroll up to 75,000 acres. Permanent easements are purchased from participating landowners of farmed wetlands, converted wetlands, and riparian areas that link wetlands. Participants agree to accept no more than fair market value of their land in return for a lump sum payment and cost-share assistance for wetland restoration by the landowner and successors. State ASCS Committees will have greater discretion in selecting wetlands that meet State environmental goals such as flood protection, water quality, migratory birds and wildlife habitat benefits. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

VET FEES -- Beginning January 21, USDA will begin charging user fees for veterinary services it provides directly to importers and exporters of animals, animal products, and biological materials. USDA's Animal and Health Inspection Service conducts inspections and tests of animals in international commerce to prevent the spread of pests and diseases. The fees are expected to total \$4 million each year. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.**

BLUE EARTAGS -- Mexico has requested, and the United States has agreed, that all cattle imported from Mexico must now be identified with numbered blue eartags issued by the Mexican government. Previous import regulations did not standardize either the color or source of the eartags. The identification will help ensure that the cattle can be traced back to their original herds. About one million cattle are imported from Mexico each year. Most are consigned to feedlots before slaughter. **Contact: Ron Hall (202) 720-3310.**

ORGANIC LIVESTOCK HEARINGS -- USDA will conduct four public hearings on the production and processing of organic livestock. Hearings will be held in Washington, D.C., January 27-28; Chicago, February 10; Denver, February 24; and in Sacramento, March 22. The purpose of the hearings is to provide the National Organic Standards Board and USDA with information to develop regulatory standards for organic livestock and livestock products. **Contact: Harold Ricker (202) 720-2704.**

LOW RATES -- Interest rates in 1994 will increase, but remain at a low level as compared to previous years. Short-term rates are expected to increase up to 1 percent, and long-term rates 0.8 of a percent. The rates will present opportunities to expand production. But U.S. economic activity is not likely to induce a sharp expansion in credit demand, keeping rates low and preventing an acceleration in inflation. **Contact: David Torgerson (202) 219-0782.**

LUMBER EXPORTS & IMPORTS -- Latest figures show that in the first three quarters of fiscal year 1993 U.S. lumber exports were up 11 percent to a total of \$5.5 billion. But imports of solid wood products expanded to their highest levels ever, up 22 percent from year ago levels to \$5.9 billion. Its the biggest gap in exports versus imports since 1987. Imports of Canadian softwood lumber dwarf wood imports from all countries combined. The value through the first three quarters of FY '93 reached \$3.4 billion, up \$1 billion from year-earlier figures, and is higher than the U.S. has imported for any full year. This trend is expected to continue. **Contact: Thomas Westcot (202) 720-0770.**

NEW SCS CHIEF -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has named Paul W. Johnson as chief of the Soil Conservation Service. Johnson is an Iowa farmer, member of the board of agriculture of the National Academy of Sciences, and a former member of the State's General Assembly. Espy also announced appointment of Pearl S. Reed as associate chief of SCS. Reed is a 25-year career employee of SCS and a native of Arkansas.

WATCH THOSE SWEETS -- Research findings illustrate that table sugar can interfere with the body's use of other nutrients. Studies were conducted at USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland, to determine if a high intake of fructose sugar alters the function of natural chemicals in human and animal brains. A group of animals that received adequate zinc in the diet had normal brain receptors whether they got fructose or starch as the carbohydrate. A marginal zinc diet and no fructose showed some changes in brain receptors. But a diet of marginal zinc and high fructose showed much greater changes. Table sugar is one-half fructose. Table sugar and sweeteners are steadily increasing in the U.S. diet through processed foods and beverages. **Contact: Sam Bhathena (301) 504-8422.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1910 -- Extension Service financial experts help consumers manage their money better. Some also offer advice on how to choose your own financial advisor. Brenda Curtis reports. (Weekly 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1392 -- Mapping meat quality improvement; selecting a financial advisor; the Year of Water; 4-H and the National Service Act; Americans are eating more rice. (Weekly 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1902 -- Genetic mapping for livestock; protecting rangeland health; making wetlands issue simpler; will the "Flood of '93 be the "Flood of '94"?; a banner year for rice. (Weekly features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1655 -- Wasp takes hold; cost-effective biocontrol; 20-year ant study; fire ant parasite; insect identity crisis. (Weekly research features.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Friday, January 21, oil crops outlook, livestock outlook, catfish processing; Monday, January 24, U.S. export trade update; Tuesday, January 25, weather & crop update; Thursday, January 27, world tobacco situation; Monday, January 31, world dairy situation, world poultry situation. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Patrick O'Leary reports on genetic maps, which are being developed by USDA researchers, for better breeding of livestock.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy on gene maps for livestock breeding; excerpts from the genetic map news conference; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen with a weekly weather and crop update.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on rural health care; Lynn Wyvill on USDA forest products research; Patrick O'Leary on vitamin A.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT; Saturdays 10:00 a.m., EDT; Mondays 8:00 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

ETHANOL...is on the agenda of most producers served by **Mike Adams** (WLDS, Jacksonville, IL). Mike says they are cautiously optimistic, but plan to keep the pressure on to assure that ethanol is included as a fuel. Mike is serving as MC at the Illinois county fair convention program that selects the 1994 reigning State Fair Queen from 71 county fair queens.

TOBACCO MARKETS...have closed and producers received about the same prices as last year, says **Allen Aldridge** (Kentucky Ag-Net, Louisville). But more product went under loan, boosting stocks. Producers expect a quota cut of 10%. Allen says the wooly worm was right, black worms indicate a hard winter. He's been providing information to help producers reduce livestock stress from the freezing temperatures.

RICE PRODUCERS...plan to plant all their allotment acreage, says **Gordon Barnes** (KSSN, Little Rock, AR). A price increase and a shipment to Japan is serving as a helpful tonic. Cotton and wheat producers are hoping for better weather this year to recover from 1993's reduced yields.

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SEVERAL FARM BROADCASTERS...in Iowa will be moderating sessions at the Eastern Iowa Conservation Tillage Show, January 25-26 in Cedar Rapids, says **Rich Balvanz** (WMT, Cedar Rapids). **Von Ketelsen** (KOEL, Oelwein), **Dale Hansen** (KWWL-TV, Waterloo), **Wade Wagner** (KGAN-TV, Cedar Rapids) will be among those helping out at the meetings and covering events. Twelve conservation districts are joining to produce the programs. Attendance reaches 4,000.

ITS AN OLD FASHIONED WINTER...says **Mike Hergert** (KKXL, Grand Forks, ND). Its been below zero for days on end, some parts of the state have received 50 inches of snow, and the wind is strong. Mike says conditions make transportation a little difficult. Congratulations to Mike. He received the Meritorious Service Award from the Red River Valley Potato Growers Association. Also a salute to Mike and his listeners for abiding the winter weather.

KEEP 'EM SAFE...remind producers to vent gas space heaters to the outdoors, or open a window slightly when in use. Don't vent a gas clothes dryer or water heater into the house for heating.

VIC POWELL 
Office of Communications